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NO. 27

AN EARLY VIEW OF GUELPH

a reprint
edited by
Hugh Douglass

1968

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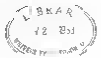

BERZ07

M A s research a o ea h s o y r Hugh Craig and I I

Quite recently I discovered a couple of cases of very early development of the city. Probably very few people would be aware of this, and it would have been kept Mr Douglass private on the whole same question, however, there have been a few items of it scattered over our history of the existence of city capital. This led the fact that it is caused early in origins early or make I don't see the it show the major mistakes made passed to do th as the twenty-seventh to our Mayor we

Mr Douglass said pressed Mr instructor at he Queen Co legate-Societies matters. He has been there for the past three years and prior to that taught for three years at Parry Sound High School. He taught history to students in Grade Nine and Ten in both grammar school text books and his. He says it base dating back from 1900 amounts already a glass 550. Another of Mr Douglass' hobbies is the history development of secondary schools in Queen

AN EARLY VIEW OF GUELPH

Hugh Douglass

In the issue of the Guelph Weekly Mercury and Advertiser, dated Thursday 19 April 1877 he found a paragraph announcing "Rambl sconces of the Settlement and Early History of Guelph - Mr Robert Thompson who came to Guelph a few months after the town was started has in press a pamphlet giving an interesting account of the origin of the Town, the settling down of the first Scots people and other reminiscences of Guelph's early history together with a list of the first and second year's settlers and others who came in soon after. The pamphlet will be ready for sale by the 23rd and copies of it can then be had at the booksellers. The production is one of special interest at the present time and to any Guelphite personally as it contains much that could be given only by one who was on the spot and who was thoroughly conversant with all the transactions recorded."

This pamphlet published by the Guelph Weekly Mercury and Advertiser, a newspaper with a Scots background underlined the more romantic account of C. Acton Burrows' Annals of the Town of Guelph published by the rival newspaper The Guelph Herald - a newspaper with Conservative leanings. The Annals of the Town of Guelph was put on sale a few days after the pamphlet written by Robert Thompson (fifty years after the founding of the town). The Guelph Weekly Mercury and Advertiser had this to say of its rival's publication:

May 3 1837

Anne e of Guelph — We have received some copies of this pamph et pre-
fencing a give the history of God ph from the time the first s we mee
cul down to the present day We have given it a careful perusal, and a re
obtained the opin on of some sto nett ers who have read it and we are
sorry to say that it contains a great many errors especia y in that portion
referring to Gue phto our late history. It wi l require a careful revis on
and correction before it can be looked upon as a reliable h story of the
Town It should also have been compiled o o more impartial spir i for
le pel ical hope is apparent throughout We regret that a person of
just ce to the pub c compe e us to say this much about a work which we
must o have been glad to praise can o we have done so conscientiously "

The manufacturers that sold Thompson's Pamphlet were: John Anderson
located on the west side of Wyndham St and Doyle Book Store located
on the west side of Wyndham St [No 26 on 28]

A R F SKETCH

of the

EARLY HISTORY OF GUELPH

BY VINCENT THOMPSON

A F IRST YEAR S SKETCH

In the spr ng of 1825 my father with his family came to Preston in the Town of Gall t He purchased a lot on the west s de of the Grand R ver and erected a house where we resided for about two yea s Gal t was at that t me a place of about 70 to 80 inhabitants with one store one tavern gr st and saw m l s operated by Absalom Shade on the west s de of the r ver and about ten dwelling houses On the morn ng of the 22nd of Apr 1827 my attent on was a ttracted by a sma l group of men and ox e s on the opposite side of the r ver I was then a boy of about two years and possess ng as I be lieve I did a fair share of tull-t edged curiosity in see ng and knowing s That was go ng on a cons der ble headlened to the spot and very soon gained ed t om the conversation that the party were prepar ng to start for a p ace they called the Block somewhere west of the Township of Waterloo So far as memory serves me the party were as follows-Gr Galt Dr Dunlop Charles Fr er John McDona d (as Sher ff of Gore and) Wl lam Gooch of Galt and some e ght or ten oxen men and chain bearers—four of whom I knew—s Harry and Carl s Lambert Steve and Ike Mo ths all residing n or near Gal t The teams be onged to Absalom Shade and were loaded with pork f our whiskey etc The easterly part of which was through

on th they had to pass was at Dead Man Cut th ably settled when only one mile or a the parties towards p of Sou pry this was a man named R ds who had about two years previous squatted near the westerly limits of the Township of Lot f ve and a hal l of no 1 the Township of the creek runs ng through his farm is at f dream on Silv's Creek. The distance to be travel ed from Ge l was about seventeen m les and for the most part was over a rough and new y-made bush road. The carriage of Call at night was took in the meeting and reached the gentlemen about five o'clock in the afternoon. As many of the more interested of the party as could d s accommodated had shelter for the night in a ing shanty on th had been erected a few days previous by the Surveyors. The same men as had they could some under weather, not used to wigwam sleeping with the thermometer at freez

The shanty stood about thirty ya ds north of where the Grand Trunk Railway Passenger Station now stands. As the story ran they was a grand jo ll union that night what was not ng to demand a comfort was more than made up by convivi al chee —for ll they were as few they just had plenty

Mr Call a manner was a man of more than ord nary ell ectual, and in size took decidedly above the average al men. The doctor was but very little ab ve the average size, but in manner a man of very different type. Though illness k ld not prevented at board he was quiet and unobtrusive in manner and withal was very sociable. As the deal is th a connection may perhaps b worth re alling—At early dawn next morning Mr. Call is waking his way out of the dark vicinity by mistake happens

[illegible] on the 23rd [illegible] [illegible] and reared, being the top of his voice. Call [illegible] great scenic [illegible].[1] On the morning of the 23rd the party proceeded to the spot where stood the historic Tree. It was a large tree [illegible] magnificently [illegible] ahead [illegible] lead in [illegible]. It was soon cut down by the axe men [illegible] the [illegible] in a [illegible] before [illegible].

On the centre of this stump the surveyor John McDonald placed his compass staff, and decreed it to be the centre of the city prospective, but a very [illegible] difficulty presented itself at this juncture. This tree stood near the banks of the River Speed, which formed the extreme eastern [illegible] of the plot [illegible] and [illegible] the town and [illegible] in the centre [illegible] inconvenience [illegible] was a problem very difficult to solve. The doctor, however, was up to the emergency and at once suggested the [illegible] to which [illegible] I granted [illegible] hearty consent. The stump was afterwards [illegible] round [illegible] and [illegible] on it [illegible] the town clock for several years.

Busy and [illegible] consequential [illegible] been brought [illegible] of [illegible] of [illegible] although that great inconvenience was experienced for [illegible] in finding even temporary accommodation for the workmen [illegible]. The first three months were mainly occupied in clearing up the land and erecting log houses in [illegible]

[1] John Galt himself says in his *Autobiography* that the tree was cut down in the evening of April 23rd.

parts of the town. Four of these original structures are still standing. Two of them may be seen on Waterloo Street—one opposite the printing-office of Spencer & Casey and the other on the premises of F. W. Grant, Esq.

This one was kept for a time as a school, and was occupied by John Lynch, father of our respected townsman Samuel Lynch, and who is entitled to the honour of having the first public school ever kept in the town. The house at present occupied by J. Conrad on Queen street was erected the same year by Mr. Perry—intended as a residence for himself, but never was occupied by him. It is still sound and in good condition, and likely to last for one hundred years longer; as also the others built by Messrs. Perry, of squared or hewn logs.

And last, the house occupied by P. Aitken, Esq., on the bank of the Speed, known as the Priory. This house is above the average size, and quality of log houses.

The one building in small, likely, finely laid up, with a wing or lean-to at each end, which one is distinguished as a one-story style of. It was originally intended as quarters, headquarters for the company's employees, and was so used for some few years previous to it being moved. The south wing, as it is, was altered, built new, and used as a tavern, and occupied by a Mr. Craig, who still acted as Postmaster, &c., &c.

Early in July, an exciting, satirical, as was needed, for the time, by the people, Pindar was lived upon for the scene on A. Grinds, were soon set to work in making the necessary preparations.

A large number of building lots have been sold on the Broadway Extension during the past few months, and we understand that a number of settlers have already commenced the erection of dwelling houses thereon. This is as it should be, and we hope to see the whole of the vacant property in that locality occupied before the end of the present year.

The building erected on the south side of the Market Square, near the Upper Mill, and which was known as the Temperance Hall, has been purchased by Mr. Thomas Shade, who intends converting it into a Furniture Warehouse. The building is admirably adapted for the purpose, and Mr. Shade will no doubt find it a very convenient place of business.

The new Market House was opened for the sale of meat, poultry, butter, eggs, &c., on Saturday last, and although the weather was very unfavourable, a large number of persons attended. The building is a very handsome one, and reflects great credit on the Architect, Mr. Thomas Miller, who has had the superintendence of the erection. The Market Square has been much improved by the removal of the old Market House, and the new one is in a much more convenient situation for the public.

The Rev. Mr. Wilson, of Toronto, will preach in the Presbyterian Church, Port Perry, on Sunday next, at 11 o'clock, a.m., and at 7 o'clock, p.m. Service will also be held in the Temperance Hall, Cartwright, at 3 o'clock, p.m.

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Waterman Gold Granden and Wee which were a large crowd. About five hundred strangers in all were present on the occasion. A hot meeting had been arranged by the committee and a number of gentlemen were by the time ready for every one together with plenty of bread ham cold tea and whiskey. The entire company were supplied with a pint of hot soup-mess flavoured. The only attempt at ornamental on being the bride and groom of the table was placed on a large side table at the head of each of the tables At each end of the table the cake had been placed which a tall very like of those who partook it loved the time when a of the occasion was called.

Next on the programme was the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the new library in the buildings in the town. One of these was intended for a bank. It was located on or about the spot where the Grand Trunk Passenger Station now stands. It was finished in the spring of 1858 and used for some months at which time by some of the Canada Company's clerks. The property was subsequently purchased from the Company by the late Mr. Allan. The bank building was afterwards demolished in order to make room for a large two-story brick dwelling. This was likewise demolished to make room for the Walker-house. The other remaining was a number of the locality a few months further to the north. Mr. David Gutteridge was the teacher in this house for the period of two or three years. There was no school on a vacation-house or church in the village for some considerable time for several years after the erection. The amusements of the day were various and diversified. The one by which was attracted much attention was

The lighting of wooden cannon These were made of beech and must be aged at least two years in length and one foot in diameter with a two-inch bore and bound with brass strong iron hands generally purchasing after the first or second shot. A few lights brought the days proceedings to a close, the whole general by dispersed. Some however of the more enthusiastic remained for the evening. A ball at the Supper was to commence at the Priory. The ball was very crowded, the whole evening was pleasantly passed off until the hour of eight when supper was announced. The Hall at the head of the table and the whole of the company walking in Mr. Wm. Hall led with the wife of the Curate and the Miss Taylor walking in Miss Hall's place. The supper was of the usual description. Sailing to the very delicacies were served up and the company were grouped together. The happiness of every face testified. Leaden footed were the hours however a rumour arrived that one Thomas Brown of Bingo was Constable of Arcadia with a endeavouring to restore peace. Had one of the heads badly cut by a cowing to the Riots of one of the Rioters. Brown was in consequence appointed Brig Boss among the company's workmen. This Beans was leader of the Irish which turned the event. Still a Brown Infants was the grantee of a house and lot on a Grant from the Canada Company from said to the Constable in the town. The lot conferred to is eighty-five on Quebec street.

A brisk business while doing continued during the remaining part of the season. The hotels were for the most part of a somewhat different class from those erected in the early part of the season. A large store was erected and kept by the Hon. Col. Elton & Lyndon. It stood where the produce store now stands on East Market Square near the Grand Trunk Station.

A sawmill was erected by the same firm on the site where the People's Hall is now situated. Jack was a Quaker but I cannot state just where he first lived.

From some cause or other unknown to the writer the business carried on by this firm was of short duration, lasting only some four or five months. Several frame cottages were erected along the northerly side of the Square. One of these was occupied by James McGill (as) now residing a short distance from town who for her of the enterprising owners of McGill Jones Brown on Wyndham Street. Early in the spring of 1825 two other houses were opened on the south side of Upper Market Square—one by Thomas McVean who occupied a log house opposite the Grand Union Hotel and the other was a frame but facing a little further westward with one Charles McCree as the proprietor.

The day book now in my possession was the one used in the entries of all the business by the Jones. I would appear that he had the misfortune of about eighty of his customers in his books, which completed only 11 out of the total number of the inhabitants then in the town.

The book is of the ordinary sort any who might be curious enough to know small the averages per week of money in circulation fifty years ago. Through the whole of 1827-8 was unusually small little was done in the way of building houses.

Quite a number however of the company's workmen were retained and employed during the winter in opening and widening the streets leading into the town.

Early in spring the work was resumed under the management of a new foreman—a young Englishman named Shinkfield who had been in the country for a few years and professing to have had some practical experience in new country work.

Mr Gale still remained in his former position but was no longer supervised with his old time together with some considerably reduced remunerations. Shinkfield brought his wife to Guelph as early as possible and shortly gave him the entire management of the company's works which consisted only for a few months in building, sawing and other general improvements.

By little time this had assumed much respectable shape and it was deemed desirable to have a grand saw-mill opening on Monday the 3rd November being the days named.

The Hotel Keepers in Guelph were duly invited to be present. The item of liquor however was something very different from what was exhibited at our last Easter Fair. There were two yoke of oxen, people and the entire block on the ground.

It was a very fitting one these days for gather together this event without a few fights. On this occasion it was Irishmen pitted against Yankees. Two brothers named Sullivan appear to have been the principal actors on the Yankee side. A new restaurant and a newly-opened tavern called the "Horse Power" kept by one Charles Partridge, were doing very unfavourably for the poor Yankees. As soon as they saw that they were over one of the Irishmen's bar tools, they began to insult them, where a number of the Irish were collected and told them that the Yankees had gagged out a boatful of Irishmen's eyes. This of course was the signal for a general

ons right upon the perpetrators. The Yankees, on ly about half a dozen in number, go ca ering that the odds were against them, and that they were ble y li le ago a overpowered. F nd for a large n the d ject of the ir hard log-house with he on their number of fellows close a the r heels! They succeeded however in reaching the house and getting ins door closed before the r pursuers over ook them. Th e was a small log house which stood on the ol wher Cook's Mills now stands on Cork st reet and was at a twelve or fourteen-log-house ly a man named Yankee Mc Inves... ill ving be fore. The prisoners however were determined not to and bullied and toggs in force upon the door...

My father happening to be in the house a the time and perceiving that the Yankees were all armed with rifles and fully determined to use them, shou l to the others "Aaron is an old duck quietly put out through a small window till the rest and find and round he and proved in front, assuring them that murder would surely be committed if they persisted in injuring the house and in my succeeded in persuading them to leave, still vowing vengeance on the Yankees they could find in town.

Mr. Shade from Ga l ... who was well known to all Yankees was in town, but took the precaution of keeping out of the way. He rode a very fine horse and put up at Jones'. Hotel.

Now it was very well known to the poor Indians, was suspected of hiding Yankees, for from the local Trial in the morning when it was brought out of the stable it was in me the I

As evidence for damages was first heard Jones, residing in a very fine the p ri ge of fifty dollars and costs. Jones, of course

s s s d was succeeded by a man named Vanhan—n

Dut o a number of ers grants came n during the me ty part of

the summer. Among hem were some eight or ten fam ilies long ts ey

th Sant and

The majority of these were tempora ity que fe ed n a large ley

hewn-party erected for D. Dun ds. This house stood on the south bank

of the R ve. Speed s fft—s north-east of the new Eng ish Church ft

was dame hated only some s gh or or years ago Doctor Dunlop took these

l ots ey ded as as he was p cased to ca l there under his spec al charge

and took an interest in se ect ng terms for them ate Some of them I

believe were among the first sett ers in that part of the township known

as the Pa sahy B ock He s ce acted as Hosts phys cian for o e as

ft was a appeal time o ill s incident rela s to my Mr Strickland ers

returned to Th s gen eman amused me s occasions y n interv ewing

the Doctor's a cquaintanc thus and re ated the fo ow ng anecdote—I—remember

he says one f ve in peal Cuts He came to my off ce and inquired for me

On being informed by the s ore per or [illegible] is d ng in ther of he promised

and and c the Great Western Hote] that h had just gone out he said

to tel him where he could look to take the ontment and jump down to my

house the first those fe to my brother s n s ding space Whatt aff of them

s he? Yes o bus ness They are not jes ar ived and have got me fat as

plos on the voyage and some of the g ocon must be taken off me s o

thin heat me she l have them o e ok on our hands and to him next in

equity the fo ep

The time was then nearing when the subject of building another church was to come up at an annual business meeting. And the question was to how it was to be done and was it at all the most pressing one. Some were in favour of a grass roof and puppery others contended that another one should be roasted, a few however of the more economics thought there would be too many fun out of a barrel of whiskey then a church. The fun first mentioned. The sale being taken it was found that whiskey had a large majority. So now we marching at the 4th of a barrel of whiskey was sent to the out end people to the market-house and now that and the settled means of advertising in those days a good number were in attendance what so might be expected things began to get tolerably thirsty now the evening. The proceedings were brought to a close by a grand concert as quite a number of the men drawing together around the room- over dost and were seen at a late hour getting in carriages & long the streets of the market house singing heartily "We Won't Go Home Till Morning".

The 27th day of August 1829 was again observed for the first time by the public in a demonstration being the first act of so many of the old workers so conducive to our welfare in the archdiocese.

I wish now to return to early to this history of the Post office On the 4th January from the Priory in the spring of 1828 the appointment was transferred to a Mr Nunn who was at that time residing a few stones throw westerly to built by Jack Mc Donnell on the north side of the street Nunn died in 1832 but how long after to the end of the year however it means days were very light as there was but one mail a week to and from the city of three years. A change

a lie corner ... of ... occupied ... It was next rented to a ... whose house ... occupied ... about ... in connection with ... Mrs. Hume was a sister to Thomas H. Rochester ... Clerk in the Canada Company ... way by ... two years ... in the city of Rochester ... He was a good ... considerable ... and was for many years ... practicing ... that city. It was while Mrs. Hume was in the occupancy of the ... premises that she became the wife of the ... Robert Corbet Esq., whereupon the office was again removed by Mr. Corbet to his own premises on Cork street, the property at present owned and occupied by G. Sandon Esq. On the death of Mr. Corbet which took place ... Mr. Corbett was formally appointed Postmaster in June 1837 and subsequently married ... Oliver, daughter of the late James Oliver Esq., who came from New York ... to Guelph in 1829. The office was next removed to Mr. Corbett's newly-erected ... corner of Wyndham and Cork streets in 1850. He held the appointment of Postmaster until the time of his death which was in 1857, a period of over twenty-four years. He was a man of correct business habits and gave general satisfaction to the public. His widow is still living and now resides with her family on Norfolk street.

There were four deaths during the first year of [illegible]. The first of these was about the end of July. A farmer or teamster named [illegible] was in town with a load of [illegible]. On his return and when about three-fourths of a mile down the [illegible] a tree was [illegible] across his waggon, killing him instantly without injury to the [illegible]

the course of any part of the waggon except the box. The front seat was torn from Chase who was killed by a falling beam while all the house-keeping in the month of November. He was a cousin of Mrs Jones' Father. Through a general view of a young man he was very well-known in his way of thinking—he was enough to be a soldier and was wont to parade a small class occasionally among his fellow-townsmen. In conversation the night previous he said he his company could—"Some ill you have any message to send I will take them for you." A man named Trimer was killed on the 7th of March, 1826 by a falling tree while out chopping. He had just emptied on the fire adjoining that now occupied by John Murphy Esq known as Mount Tara formerly known as the Dwyer Farm. The other was a man named Church who was choked by a piece of beef on the Good Friday following upon a talk in a tavern in Jones' Tavern. Turner was buried in South Market Square a few feet from the west corner of the stone building formerly occupied for an academy. His name we were never exhumed that I am aware of. The other three were taken away for interment by their friends. Mackenzie a man was at last time stopped and carried to the top of Church Hill (as it was then called) and an office or so established which was intended as a burying ground when it ceased. A part was of what is known as the old burying ground was ceased till early in August and the first one buried was a man named Field one of the first years soldiers of the Scotch Block on Queens Road. Two others were interred the day following—one a Mr. Wallace, father of the Mr. Wallace of the township of Pickering the other a man name Thomas from Paisley Scotland who died very shortly after his arrival in town

Thomas Parry & Peter Hope were the first Wardens of the Church which was built during the duration of the Rev Mr Addison's ministry and was first opened for Divine Worship on the 28th of April 1830. The Church was up and running on the 10th of December following

The first Sunday School was opened by Mr Richard William Cowan in August 1828 which in those days consisted of four boys from New York it was first held in a small log house on South Market Square owned by Mr Nicholas Desjardins Harrison who with his wife were deeply interested

The first school teacher in the town was a man named Alvin who opened a private school for a few months towards the end of 1827

An office for job printing was opened in Water St Niagara early in 1828 by a man named Shallenton and selling only some six months

The Canada Company's office in the town of Guelph for the first year was opened in the year 1827-8. This office was under the charge of Mr James Hodgert Esq. who had been running in the year of 1827-8. This office was under the charge of Quebec Street now St George's Square also in the property of the Messrs Hotherman

The first marriage in Guelph was that of Christopher Keough to Ellen Ann Brown in September 1827 Mrs Keough lived at Eramosa Road and resided adjacent to the town

The first practicing physician in the town was a Doctor Welsh in 1827

Thomas Lynch was the first born who is now living in Guelph

LIST OF THE NAMES OF THE FIRST YEARS SETTLERS IN GUELPH etc., etc.

Jas Lynch Hugh Henry Neil Thompson Jas McQuillan Mrs Jas McQuillan Felix Mullen Mrs Michael Allen Mrs Arr Keough Stanton Thos & Wm Ince Hugh Mc ... Mrs McInnes Wm McArthur & Mrs McInnes Kennedy [brother] Thos Ruddle Mrs McKenzie John G. Ellis Mrs Chas McTague Mrs John McTague Mrs Peter McTague Mrs Sodon Mrs Sticklers Mrs Thain Mary McGraw Wm McIlroy Henry Foster Jas Wyman Mrs. Macdonald [widow] mother of Mrs McInnes & Mrs McCrae [widow] mother of Mrs. and Mary McCreay Wm Clark Miss E. Harrison Mrs Henry A. ... Campbell Thomas Kelly

SECOND YEARS SETTLERS

Wm McCown Sam McCown Mrs Ann ... Mrs Jane Stanton Mary Dudley Isaac Lan... Mrs Hamble Will ... Patterson, Robert Patterson Mrs Charles Bell ... Mrs ...ard [widow] Thomas Lynch Joseph Morgan Wm Logar Arch McCorkindale John McCorkindale John Brew Jas Keough Wm Sothan Bernard McTague Sarah McTague Robert Knowlen Mrs Pledge Janet McKerrell Wm Tom Watson John Walker & David Ascarsis Gavin Aske ... Robert Walker &

I ... of some of those known ... have been ... dates of Guelph in the winter of 1827-8 in addition to those ... easily given or referred to in the narrative. — Chas Armstrong ... Atkins Chas Boyington Thos Baker Chas Burns Jas Byrd John Clark James Cavanagh Robert Clark Ed Carroll John Clark James Carmichael Denis Deegan Wm. Dismore James Elliott, Robert Elder John Foster John Farr ... Wm Gregg David

Alex. Hamilton, Hare, D... ... ... Hall ... ... Wm. ...

George Henry Thomas Johnson Thomas Kerr ... Wm. Kennedy Edward Rankin ... Lampert John Lennox Thomas Lee ... Livingston James McCarthy ... Moore ... Wm. McBrea John McDonald James McGe... John McLeod McLaren & R. ... John McNeil Hugh McDonald ... ... Alex. Moore John Gattany, John Smith Geo. Wa... A... Wm. Johnson Richard Johnson Alex. McTavish J. O. ... Henry Fuchsbaker Thomas S... Thomas Smith ... ... John Barsen Joseph ... Robert McOwen John McNulty James Thompson John Thompson John Tott... W. W. Wright... John Wi... ... James Voles John Mitchell Andrew Ritchie

ROBERT THOMPSON

Kilbeberg[2]
Guelph April 21st 1872

GUELPH
Mercury Steam Printing House Macdonnell Street
1872

[2] Kilbeburn is still standing ... It is to the west of Guelph

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Thompson, Robert

AN EARLY VIEW
OF GUELPH

a reprint
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In his research into local history Mr. Hugh Douglass of Guelph recently discovered a pamphlet on the early development of the city. Probably very few copies were printed and of course fewer were kept. Mr. Douglass points out that while some Guelph residents have heard of it none appears to own or to know of the existence of any copies. This and the fact that the account is by an original settler make it desirable that it should be reprinted and we are pleased to do this as the twenty-seventh in our Nugget series.

Mr. Douglass is at present Art Instructor at the Guelph Collegiate-Vocational Institute. He has been there for the past three years and prior to that taught for three years at Parry Sound High School. He is particularly interested in collecting early Upper Canada and Ontario public and grammar school text books and his library of these dating back from 1900 amounts already to about 350. Another of Mr. Douglass's interests is the historical development of secondary schools in Guelph.

AN EARLY VIEW OF GUELPH

Hugh Douglass

In the issue of the Guelph Weekly Mercury and Advertiser, dated Thursday, 19 April, 1877 the following paragraph is inserted:

"Reminiscences of the Settlement and Early History of Guelph. - Mr. Robert Thompson, who came to Guelph a few months after the town was started, has in press a pamphlet giving an interesting account of the origin of the Town, the cutting down of the first tree, besides many other reminiscences of Guelph's early history, together with a list of the first and second year's settlers, and of others who came in soon after. The pamphlet will be ready for sale by the 23rd, and copies of it can then be had of the booksellers. The production is one of special interest at the present time, and is well worth a perusal, as it contains much that could be given only by one who was on the spot, and who was thoroughly conversant with all the transactions recorded."

This pamphlet, published by the Guelph Weekly Mercury and Advertiser, a newspaper with a Liberal bias, antedated the more complete account of C. Acton Burrows, Annals of the Town of Guelph, published by the rival newspaper, The Guelph Herald, - a newspaper with Conservative leanings. The Annals of the Town of Guelph was put on sale a few days after the pamphlet written by Robert Thompson (fifty years after the founding of the town). The Guelph Weekly Mercury and Advertiser had this to say of its rival's publication:

May 3, 1877

Annals of Guelph. — We have received some copies of this pamphlet, professing to give the history of Guelph from the time the first tree was cut down to the present day. We have given it a careful perusal, and also obtained the opinion of some old settlers who have read it, and we are sorry to say that it contains a great many errors especially in that portion referring to Guelph's earlier history. It will require a careful revision and correction before it can be looked upon as a reliable history of the Town. It should also have been compiled in a more impartial spirit, for its political bias is apparent throughout. We regret that a sense of justice to the public compels us to say this much about a work which we would have been glad to praise could we have done so conscientiously."

The booksellers that sold Thompson's pamphlet were: John Anderson, located on the east side of Wyndham St., and Doyle Bank Store, located on the west side of Wyndham St. (No. 26 or 28).

A BRIEF SKETCH
of the
EARLY HISTORY OF GUELPH
BY ROBERT THOMPSON
A FIRST YEAR'S SETTLER

In the spring of 1825 my father with his family, came in reside in the Town of Galt. He purchased a lot on the west side of the Grand River and erected a house where we resided for about two years. Galt was at that time a place of about 70 to 90 inhabitants, with one store, one tavern, grist and saw mill, a cooper's shop, a distillery, and about ten dwelling-houses. On the morning of the 22nd of April, 1827, my attention was arrested by a small group of men and boys on the opposite side of the river. I was then a boy of about ten years, and possessing, as I believed I did, a fair share of full-fledged curiosity in seeing and knowing all that was going on around me, I hastened in the spot, and very much gathered from the conversation that the party was preparing to start for a place they called the Block, somewhere east of the Township of Waterloo. So far as memory serves me the party were as follows:-Dr. Galt, Dr. Dunlop, Charles Prior, John McDonald (late Sheriff of Wentworth), William Goodin, of Galt, and some eight or ten axe men and chain bearers--four of whom I knew--as Harry and Curtis Lemuel, Stace, and Ira Holden, all residing in or near Galt. The teams belonged to Absalom Shade, and were loaded with pork, flour, whiskey, etc. The easterly part of Waterloo through

which they had to pass was all that time but thinly settled, and only one settler in the entire Township of Guelph; this was a man named Ellis, who had about two years previous squatted near the westerly limits of the Township, about five and a half miles from the town, the creek running through his farm to still known as Ellis's Creek. The distance to be travelled from Galt was about seventeen miles, and for the most part was over a rough and newly-made bush road. The carriage left Galt at eight o'clock in the morning, and reached their destination about five o'clock in the afternoon. As many of the more favoured of the party as could be accommodated took shelter for the night in a log shanty which had been erected a few days previous by the Surveyors; the remainder as best they could, some under waggons, and some in wigwams covered with the branches of trees.

The shanty stood about thirty yards north of where the Grand Trunk Railway Passenger Station now stands. As the story runs they had a grand jollification that night; what was lacking in domestic comfort was more than made up by convivial cheer—for if they were no Lou they just had plenty.

Mr. Galt in manner was a man of more than ordinary refinement, and in size considerably above the average of men. The Doctor was but very little above the average size, but in manner a man of very different type. Though liberal, kind, and generous at heart he was gruff and uncouth in manner, and withal was very eccentric. An incident in this connection may perhaps be worth relating:—At early dawn next morning Mr. Galt is making his way out of the dark shanty, by mistake happens

in front on the Doctor's shins, whereupon he was greatly incensed, and roared out at the top of his voice "Can ye na keep off folkis shins, ye great muckle brain." On the morning of the 23rd the party proceeded to the spot where stood the Historic Tree, it was a large bird's-eye or sugar-maple, about two feet in diameter. It was soon cut down by the axe men, Mr Galt and the Doctor giving it a few blows before felling.[1] On the centre of this stump the surveyor John McDonald, pioneer his compass dial, and declared it to be the centre of the city prospective, but a very serious difficulty presented itself at this juncture. This tree stood near the banks of the River Speed, which formed the extreme eastern limits of the plot or hilllock set apart as the site proper for the town; and how to fix the centre and circumference on one and the same spot was a problem very difficult to solve. The Doctor, however, was quite equal to the emergency, and at once suggested the ladies' fan, to which all present gave hearty consent. The stump was all-armed, lanced round, neatly levelled and dressed on the top, and a sun-dial placed on it, which answered as the town clock for several years.

Ready employment and remunerative wages soon brought reinforcements of craftsmen of various kinds to the place, inasmuch that great inconvenience was experienced for a time in finding even temporary accommodation for the workmen and their families. The first three months were mainly occupied in clearing up the land and erecting log houses in different

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[1] John Galt himself says in his Autobiography that the tree was cut down in the evening of April 23rd.

parts of the town. Four of these original structures are still standing. Two of them may be seen on Waterloo street--one opposite the planing-mill of Mercer & Conroy, and the other on the premises of F. W. Stone, Esq.

This one was the first blacksmith shop, and was occupied by John Lynch, father of our respected townsman James Lynch, and who is still living in the honour of being the first of the old settlers now living in the town. The house at present occupied by Mr. Herod, on Quebec street, was erected the same year by Mr. Prior--intended as a residence for himself, but never was occupied by him. It is still sound and in good condition, and likely to last for one hundred years longer; unlike the other three buildings it was of square or hewn logs.

And last, the house occupied by D. Allen, Esq., on the bank of the Speed, known as the Priory. This house is above the average size and quality of log houses.

The main building is about fifty by thirty feet, with a wing or lean-to at each end, which was all finished in first-class style in 1828. It was originally intended as general headquarters for the company's employees, and was also the residence of Mr. Gall for some time previous to his being recalled. The south wing, while in an unfinished state, was set apart as a tavern, and occupied by a Mr. Reid, who also acted as Postmaster, pro tem.

Early in July an opening celebration was mooted, and finally the King's birthday was fixed upon for the occasion. All hands were soon set to work in making the necessary preparations.

A large frame building in the centre of a market house was soon in course of erection, and was to be used on the occasion as a place of amusement and festivity. In view of the coming event another tavern was also soon in course of erection.

This building stood on the south side of east Market Square nearly opposite the Royal Hotel, and was built by one Philip Jones. Absalom Shade had by this time finished his contract of cutting and clearing what was then called the Broad Road, now Waterloo Road, extending from the Waterloo line in the town, a distance of six miles. He soon after commenced another contract of chopping and clearing the road through the Township of Puslinch or Clergy Reserve. The Company, with but few exceptions were then getting all their supplies from Mr. Shade, viz., pork, flour, whiskey, etc., etc., so that teams were almost daily on the road from Galt. By this means the settler was enabled to work his way for the first time to the new town. My father and brother being here at the time was an additional inducement to me to visit the place of so much notoriety. The King's birthday happening in fair on Sunday the celebration must necessarily come off on Monday the 23th, but Sunday did not prove a day of rest. The new market house was only about half shingled. The ox had to be dressed and made ready for the roast, and various other little preliminaries preparatory to the occasion. The day came, and visitors from various parts began to flock in. The band from "Little York," now Toronto, was in attendance. Mr. Gurnell, of Ancaster, editor of the Gore Gazette was present and had quite a lengthy article in his next issue.

Waterloo, Galt, Eramosa, and Wholwich were all represented. About five hundred strangers in all were present early in the morning. The dressed ox had been placed on a windlass in front of a burning log pile and turning on on a spit for about six hours. He was then cut in pieces and served up. Two pot-ash kettles of potatoes were by this time also ready for serving up, together with plenty of dread, hemlock tea, and whiskey. The entire company were supplied with a plain but sumptuous dinner; the only attempt at ornamentation being the head and horns of the bullock placed on a large side dish at the head of one of the tables. All were satisfied that the ox had been roasted whole, but very few of those who partook believed that the whole of the ox was roasted.

Next on the programme was the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the two first stone buildings in the town. One of these was intended for a bank. It was located on or about the spot where the Grand Trunk Passenger Station now stands. It was finished in the spring of 1829, and used for some months as an office by some of the Canada Company's clerks. The property was subsequently purchased from the Company by the late Dr. Alling. This building was afterwards demolished in order to make room for a large two-story brick dwelling. This was likewise demolished to make room for the station-house. The other referred to was a school-house located a few chains further to the east. Mr. David Mathews was the teacher in this house for the first ten or fifteen years. It was also used as a meeting-house or church by the various religious denominations for several years after its erection. The amusements of the day were various and diversified. The only thing that attracted much attention was

the firing of wooden cannon. These were made of beech and maple logs about two feet in length and one foot in diameter, with a two-inch bore, and bound with three strong iron bands, generally bursting after the first or second shot. A few lights brought the day's proceedings to a close, and the crowd generally dispersed. Some, however, of the more enthusiastic remained for the evening. A ball and supper was to come off in the Priory. The ladies were spread in the main building, as yet in an unfinished state. From sixty to eighty sat down to a sumptuous supper, Mr. Gell in the head of the table and the old Doctor acting as Vice. What followed the removing of the cloth may be easier imagined than described. Suffice it to say the night drove on with songs and cheer and ere the grey was growing below. The ball was led off by Mr. Gell and Mrs. Leeder. Further on in the evening, however, a row ensued, and one Thomas Brown, acting as Constable pro tem., while endeavoring to restore peace, had one of his hands badly cut by a carving knife in the hands of one of the rioters. Brown was in consequence appointed drag boss among the company's workmen. This Brown was father of the first child born in the town. Lillie Brown, infant, was the grantee of a house and lot as a free grant from the Canada Company promised to the first born in the town. The lot referred to is eighty-five on Quebec street.

A brisk business in building continued during the remaining part of the season. The building, however, were for the most part of a somewhat different class from those erected in the early part of the season. A frame store was erected and kept by the firm of Gilkison & Leeder. It stood where the produce store now stands on East Market Square, near the Grand Trunk Station.

A saw-mill was erected by the same firm on the site where the Pemisa's Block now stands. Jenkins & Oliver built a stone store just opposite the first mentioned on the north-west side of the Square.

From some cause or other unknown to the writer the business carried on by this firm was of short duration, lasting only some four or five months. Several frame dwellings were erected along the northerly side of the Square. One of these belonged to Mr. James McQuillan, now residing a short distance from town, and father of the enterprising owners of McQuillan's Block on Wyndham street. Early in the spring of 1828 two other stores were opened on the south side of Upper Market Square—one by Thomas McVane, who occupied a log house opposite the drill shed; the other was a frame building a little further eastward, with one Charles McCrae as its proprietor.

The day book now my property was the one used in the establishment at the time. By the index it would appear that he had the names of about eighty of his customers in his books which comprised nearly if not quite one half the adult male portion of the inhabitants then in the town.

This book is at the disposal of any who might be curious enough to know what the average price of whiskey in Guelph was fifty years ago. Though the winter of 1827-8 was unusually mild, little was done in the way of building houses.

Quite a number, however, of the company's workmen were retained and employed during the winter in opening and extending the roads leading into the town.

Early in spring the work was resumed under the management of a new foreman—a young Englishman named Strickland who had been in the country for a few years, and possessing in have had some practical experience in new country life.

Mr. Gall first met with him in Toronto and was so favourably impressed with his abilities, together with some satisfactory recommendations that he brought him in Guelph on trial, and finally gave him the entire management of the company's works, which consisted mainly in a few mantles to bridge building and minor general improvements.

By this time the town had assumed such proportions that it was deemed desirable to hold semi-annual fairs. So the first Mondays in May and November were the days named.

The first May Fair in Guelph was a day long to be remembered. The show of stock, however, was something very different from what was exhibited at our last Easter Fair. Three oxen and two yoke of oxen comprised the entire stock on the ground.

It was a rare thing in those days for gatherings of this sort to pass off without a few fights. On this occasion it was Irishmen pitted against Yankees. Two brothers named Sullivan appear to have been the principal actors on the Yankee side. A row commenced at a new two-storied tavern called the "Horse of Plenty" kept by one Charles McTague, resulting very unfavourably for the poor Yankees. As soon as that affray was over one of the eyewitnesses hurried all up town to Jessel Lovers, where a number of Irishmen were collected, and told them that the Yankees had gauged out a bushel of Irishmen's eyes. This of course was the signal for a general

onslaught upon the perpetrators. The Yankees only about half a dozen in number, perceiving that the odds were against them, and that they were likely to be again overpowered, sought for refuge in the direction of their boarding-house with twice their number of Irishmen close at their heels. They succeeded, however, in reaching the house and getting the door closed before their pursuers overtook them. This was a small two storey house which stood on the lot where Cook's Hotel now stands on Cork street, and kept as a tavern or boarding-house by a man named Yankee Mathews, still living, I believe. The Irishmen, however, were determined not to be foiled, and began to force open the door.

My father happening to be in the house at the time, and perceiving that the Yankees were all armed with axes, and fully determined in case they should be others force an entrance, quietly got out through a small window at the rear end and went round in the crowd in front, assuring them that murder would surely be committed if they persisted in entering the house, and finally succeeded in persuading them to leave, still vowing vengeance on all the Yankees they could find in town.

Mr. Shade, from Galt, who was well known to be a Yankee, was in town, but took the precaution of keeping out of the way. He rode a very fine horse and put up at Jones' Hotel.

Now it was very well known that the poor animal was suspected of being Yankee too, from the fact that in the morning when it was brought out of the stable it was minus the tail.

An action for damages was instituted against Jones, resulting in a verdict for the plaintiff for sixty dollars and costs. Jones left soon

aller, and was succeeded by a man named Vanhoulin.

Quite a number of emigrants came in during the early part of the summer. Among them were some eight or ten families from Paisley in Scotland.

The majority of these were temporarily quartered in a large log house newly erected for Dr. Dunlop. This house stood on the south bank of the River Speed a little north-east of the new English Church. It was demolished only some eight or ten years ago. Doctor Dunlop took these Paisley bodies, as he was pleased to call them, under his special charge, and took an interest in selecting farms for them, also. Some of them, I believe, were among the first settlers in that part of the township known as the Paisley Block. He also acted as their physician for a time, as it would appear from a little incident related by Mr. Sickle and before referred to. This gentleman amused himself occasionally in interviewing the Doctor's eccentricities and ruses. The following anecdote I remember he says one time in particular. He came in my office and inquired for me. On being informed by the store porter (Mr. Fielding, father of the present landlord of the Great Western Hotel), that I had just gone out, he said to tell him when he comes back to take the canoe and jump down in my house and treat those Paisley bodies to a dose apiece. Whilst all of them, sir? Yes, to be sure. They are but just arrived and have got no bit as yet on the voyage, and some of their bacon must be taken out, or with this heat we shall have them all sick on our hands. And so I thought to spare the jump

The time was now nearing when the subject of holding another King's birthday celebration must be considered. And the question as to how it was to be observed was of all the most perplexing. Some were in favour of a grand ball and supper; others contended that another ox should be roasted. A few, however, of the more economical thought there would be far more fun out of a barrel of whiskey than either of the two first mentioned. The vote being taken it was found that whiskey had a large majority. So on the morning of the 21th a barrel of whiskey was rolled out and placed in the market-house, and notwithstanding the limited means of advertising in those days a goodly number were in attendance, and, as might be expected, things began to get tolerably lively towards evening. The proceedings were brought to a close by a grand concert, as quite a number of the more devoted lingered around the much- wooed spot and were seen of a late hour sitting in ranges along the steps of the market-house singing heartily "We Won't Go Home Till Morning."

The 12th day of August 1829, was again observed for the last time in Guelph, the only demonstration being the firing off of as many of the old muskets as could be collected in the neighbourhood.

It will now be return briefly to the history of the Post office. On Reid's removal from the Priory in the spring of 1828 the appointment was transferred to a Mr. Hume, who was at that time residing in the stone store referred to, but I by Jenkins & Oliver on lot No. 1 a little west of the station. Hume died in 1832 but his widow still retained the office. The duties however in those days were very light as there was but one mail a week in the town for the first three years. A change

in the ownership of the property soon after necessitated another removal. It was next located in a small frame house on Madonna Street, near or about the intersection with Sandusky street. In rear of Carter's store. Mrs. Hume was sister to Thomas B. Husband, a Clerk in the Canada Company's employ for nearly two years, but all here to reside in the city of Rochester in 1829. He was a gentleman of considerable ability, and has for many years and still is, in the love practicing law in that city. It was while Mrs. Hume was in the occupancy of the last mentioned premises that she became the wife of the late Robert Corbet, Esq., whereupon the office was again removed by Mr. Corbet to his own premises on Cork street, the property at present owned and occupied by E. Newton, Esq. On the death of Mrs. Corbet, which was soon after Mr. Corbett was formally appointed Postmaster in June 1837 and subsequently married Miss Oliver, daughter of the late James Oliver, Esq., who came from New York with his family to reside in Guelph in 1829. The office was next removed to Mr. Corbett's then newly-erected block, corner of Wyndham and Cork streets, in 1850. He held the appointment of Postmaster until the time of his death, which was in 1861 a period of over twenty-four years. He was a man of correct business habits and gave general satisfaction as a public officer. His widow is still living and now resides with her family on Norfolk street.

There were four deaths during the first year, all accidental. The first of these was about the end of July. A hawker or huer pedlar named Stephen Tuttle was in town with a load of beer. On his return, and when about three-fourths of a mile down the Water or Road, a tree was blown across the waggon, killing him instantly, without injury to either

the horse or any part of the waggon, except the box. The next was a man named Chene who was killed by a falling down while at a house-raising in the month of November. He was a carpenter by trade and boarded at Jones' Hotel. Though comparatively a young man he was very wise—in his way of thinking—wise enough to be a scoffer and was wont to parade his scepticism occasionally among his fellow-boarders. In conversation the night previous he said to his companions—"Boys, if you have any messages to be ta[illegible] take them to you." A man named Turner was killed on the 7th of March, 1828 by a falling tree while out chopping. He had just located on the lot adjoining that now occupied by John Murphy, Esq., known as Mount Tara (formerly known as the Dwyer Farm). The other was a man named Church who was choked by a piece of beef on the Good Friday following, while taking his breakfast in Jones' tavern. Turner was buried in South Market Square a few feet from the west corner of the stone building recently erected for an arsenal. His remains were never exhumed that I am aware of. The other three were taken away for interment by their friends. Macdonnel Street was at that time chopped and cleared to the top of Church Hill (as it was then called) and an acre or so slashed, which was intended as a burying ground when cleared. A portion of what is known as the old burying ground was cleared off early in August, and the first one buried was a man named Kaid, one of the first year's settlers in the Scotch Block on Elora Road. Two others were interred the day following—one a Mr. Wallace, father of the Mr. D. Wallace, of the township of Pilkington; the other a man name Thone from Paisley, Scotland, who died very shortly after his arrival in town.

Horace Perry of Port Hope, millwright, who had the contract of building the Guelph Mills arrived in Guelph with a staff of hut-dwellers and millwrights on the 28th of April, 1830. The mill was up and running on the 10th of December following.

The first Sunday School was opened by Mr. Buchanan, British Consul, in August, 1828, while in Guelph on a visit for a few days from New York. It was in a small log house on South Market Square, owned by the late Benjamin Harrison, who, with his wife, were among the teachers.

The first school teacher in the town was a man named Davis, who opened a private school for a few months towards the end of 1827.

An office for job printing was opened on Waterloo street early in 1828. By a man named Challerton, existing only some six months.

The Canada Company's offer of a town lot and house for the first weaving done in the town was awarded to the late James Hedgard, Esq., who had a loom running in the winter of 1827-8. This lot is situate on the corner of Quebec street and St. Georgale Square, latterly the property of the Messrs. Heffernan.

The first marriage solemnized was that of Christopher Keough to Miss Ann Green in September, 1827. Mrs. Keough is still living, and resides adjacent to the town.

The first practicing physician in the town was a Doctor Welsh in 1827.

Thomas Lynch was the first born who is now living in Guelph.

LIST OF THE NAMES OF THE FIRST YEARS SETTLERS IN

GUELPH STILL LIVING.

Jas. Lynch Hugh Henry Robt. Thompson Jas. McQuillan, Mrs. Jas. McQuillan Felix Harlem, Mrs. Michael Allen Mrs. Ann Keough D. Stirton, Donald Wallace, Hugh Wallace, Alex. McDonald, Walter McDonald, Alex. Kennedy (butcher) Thos. McBride, Mrs. McBride, John Gillie, Mrs. Charles McTague, Mrs. John McTague, Mrs. Peter McTague, Mrs. Seden, Mrs. Bickford, Mrs. Tobin, Mary McCrea, Wm. McCrea, Henry Foster, Jas. Beesham, Mrs. Macdonald (widow) mother of Alex Macdonald, Mrs. McCrea (widow), mother of Wm. and Mary McCrea, Wm. Croft, Miss F. Harrison, Mrs. Henry Alex. Campbell, Thomas Duffy.

SECOND YEAR'S SETTLERS.

Wm. McCuen, Saml. McCuen, Mrs. Ann Mitchell, Mrs. Jane Ritchie, Martin Bailey, Isaac Lonix, Mrs. Mabbie, William Patterson, Robert Patterson, Mrs. Charles McWilliams, Mrs. Laird (widow), Thomas Lynch, Joseph Morgan, Wm. Logan, Arch. McCorkindale, John McCorkindale, John Drew, Jas. Keough, Wm. Beesham, Barnard McTague, Sarah McTague, Robert Knowles, Mrs. Fields, James McKersie, William McKersie, John McKenzie, David McKersie, Gavin McKersie, Robert McKersie.

List of some of these known to have been residents of Guelph in the winter of 1827-8 in addition to those already given or referred to in the narrative — Chas. Armstrong, E. B. Akins, Chas. Baylaglen, Thos. Baker, Chas. Burns, Jas. Allard, John Clark, James Coleman, Robert Clark, Ed. Carroll, John Clark, James Cornford, Daniel Dougan, Wm. Dallmore, James Elliott, Robert Elder, John Foster, John Farrell, Wm. Gregg, David

Gibbs Edward Gilmore, Daniel Hill Louis Howard John Hall John Herrald George Henry Thomas Johnson Thomas Kelly, Wm. Kenly, Enoch Kenyon, Orish Lampert, John Lennox, Thomas Lee Malcolm Livingston, James McCartney Michael Mullen Wm McCrea, John McDonell James McKerr John McLeod, McLaren & Miller, John McNeil Hugh McDonald Peter Butchard, Alex Rose, John Gaffany, John Smith Geo Wallace, Alex Reid, Wm Johnson, Richard Johnson, Alex McTavish J. O'Dwyer, Henry Pennyfeather, Thomas Stewart, Thomas Smith, Reuben Mahaffy, John Barnes Joseph Milloy Robert McCuan, John McNulty James Thompson, John Thompsen, John Tait, W. W. Wright, John Wilson Matthias Werth James Yates John Mitchell Andrew Ritchie

ROBERT THOMPSON

Ellenburn[2]
Guelph, April 21st 1877.)

GUELPH:
Mercury Steam Printing House, Macdonnell Street.
1877

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[2]Ellenburn is still standing. It is to the west of Guelph.

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1 [redacted], Robert
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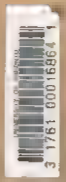

Thompson, Robert
An early view of Guelph

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a reprint
edited by
Hugh Douglass

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In his research into local history, Mr. Hugh Douglass of Guelph recently discovered a pamphlet on the early development of the city. Probably very few copies were printed and of course fewer were kept. Mr. Douglass points out that while some Guelph residents have heard of it none appears to own or to know of the existance of any copies. This and the fact that the account is by an original settler make it dasirable that it should be reprinted and we are pleased to do this as the twenty-seventh in our Nugget series.

Mr. Douglass is at present Art Instructor at the Guelph Collegiate-Vocational Institute. He has been there for the past three years and prior to that taught for three years at Perry Sound High School. He is particularly interested in collecting early Upper Canada and Ontario public and grammar school text books, and his library of these dating back from 1900 amounts already to about 350. Another of Mr. Douglass' interests is the historical development of secondary schools in Guelph.

AN EARLY VIEW OF GUELPH

Hugh Douglass

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BY ROBERT THOMPSON,

A FIRST YEAR'S SETTLER.

In the spring of 1825, my father, with his family, came to reside in the Town of Galt. He purchased a lot on the west side of the Grand River, and erected a house where we resided for about two years. Galt was at that time a place of about 70 to 80 inhabitants, with one store, one tavern, grist and saw mill, a cooper's shop, a distillary, and about ten dwelling-houses. On the morning of the 22nd of April, 1827, my attention was arrested by a small group of men and ox teams on the opposite side of the river. I was then a boy of about ten years, and possessing, as I believed I did, a fair share of full-fledged curiosity in seeing and knowing all that was going on around me, I hastened to the spot, and very soon gathered from the conversation that the party was preparing to start for a place they called the Block, somewhere east of the Township of Waterloo. So far as memory serves me the party were as follows:-Mr. Galt, Dr. Dunlop, Charles Prior, John McDonald (late Sheriff of Goderich), William Goodin, of Galt, and some eight or ten axe men and chain bearers—four of whom I knew—as Henry and Curtis Lambert, Steele, and Ira Hotdin, all residing in or near Galt. The teams belonged to Absalom Shade, and were loaded with pork, flour, whiskey, etc. The easterly part of Waterloo through

which they had to pass was at that time but thinly settled, and only one settler in the entire Township of Guelph; this was a man named Rife, who had about two years previous squatted near the westerly limits of the Township, about five and a half miles from the town; the creek running through his farm is still known as Rife's Creek. The distance to be travelled from Galt was about seventeen miles, and for the most part was over a rough and newly-made bush road. The cortege left Galt at eight o'clock in the morning, and reached their destination about five o'clock in the afternoon. As many of the more favoured of the party as could be accommodated took shelter for the night in a log shanty which had been erected a few days previous by the Surveyors; the remainder as best they could, some under waggons, and some in wigwams covered with the branches of trees.

The shanty stood about thirty yards north of where the Grand Trunk Railway Passenger Station now stands. As the story ran they had a grand jollification that night; what was lacking in domestic comfort was more than made up by convivial cheer—for if they were na fou they just had plenty.

Mr. Galt in manner was a man of more than ordinary refinement, and in size considerably above the average of men. The Doctor was but very little above the average size; but in manner a man of very different type. Though liberal, kind, and generous at heart, he was gruff and uncouth in manner, and withal was very eccentric. An incident in this connection may perhaps be worth relating:—At early dawn next morning Mr. Galt, in making his way out of the dark shanty, by mistake happened

to tread on the Doctor's shins, whereupon he was greatly incensed, and roared out at the top of his voice, "Can ye na keep off folk's shins, ye great muckle brute." On the morning of the 23rd the party proceeded to the spot where stood the Historic Tree; it was a large bird's-eye or sugar-maple, about two feet in diameter. It was soon cut down by the axe men, Mr. Galt and the Doctor giving it a few blows before falling.[1] On the centre of this stump the surveyor, John McDonald, planted his compass staff, and declared it to be the centre of the city prospective; but a very serious difficulty presented itself at this juncture. This tree stood near the banks of the River Speed, which formed the extreme eastern limits of the plot or hillock set apart as the site proper for the town; and how to fix the centre and circumference on one end the same spot was a problem very difficult to solve. The Doctor, however, was quite equal to the emergency, and at once suggested the ladies' fan, to which all present gave hearty consent. The stump was afterwards fanned round, neatly levelled and dressed on the top, and a sun-dial placed on it, which answered as the town clock for several years.

Ready employment and remunerative wages soon brought reinforcements of craftsmen of various kinds to the place, insomuch that great inconvenience was experienced for a time in finding even temporary accommodation for the workmen and their families. The first three months were mainly occupied in clearing up the land and erecting log houses in different

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[1] John Galt himself says in his Autobiography that the tree was cut down in the evening of April 23rd.

parts of the town. Four of these original structures are still standing. Two of them may be seen on Waterloo street--one opposite the planing-mill of Mercer & Casey, and the other on the premises of F. W. Stone, Esq.

This one was the first blacksmith shop, and was occupied by John Lynch, father of our respected townsmen, James Lynch, and who is entitled to the honour of being the first of the old settlers now living in the town. The house at present occupied by Dr. Herod, on Quebec street, was erected the same year by Mr. Prior--intended as a residence for himself, but never was occupied by him. It is still sound and in good condition, and likely to last for one hundred years longer; unlike the other three buildings it was of squared or hewn logs.

And last, the house occupied by D. Allan, Esq., on the bank of the Speed, known as the Priory. This house is above the average size and quality of log houses.

The main building is about fifty by thirty feet, with a wing or lean-to at each end, which was all finished in first-class style in 1828. It was originally intended as general headquarters for the company's employees and was also the residence of Mr. Gelt for some time previous to his being recalled. The south wing, while in an unfinished state, was set apart as a tavern, and occupied by a Mr. Reid, who also acted as Postmaster pro tem.

Early in July an opening celebration was mooted, and finally the King's birthday was fixed upon for the occasion. All hands were soon set to work in making the necessary preparations.

A large frame building to be called a market house was soon in course of erection, and was to be used on the occasion as a place of amusement and festivity. In view of the coming event another tavern was also soon in course of erection.

This building stood on the south side of east Market Square, nearly opposite the Royal Hotel, and was kept by one Philip Jones. Absalom Shade had by this time finished his contract of cutting and clearing what was then called the Broad Road, now Waterloo Road, extending from the Waterloo line to the town, a distance of six miles. He soon after commenced another contract of chopping and clearing the road through the Township of Puslinch or Clergy Reserve. The Company, with but few exceptions, were then getting all their supplies from Mr. Shade, viz., pork, flour, whiskey, etc., etc., so that teams were almost daily on the road from Galt. By this means the writer was enabled to work his way for the first time to the new town. My father and brother being here at the time was an additional inducement to me to visit the place of so much notoriety. The King's birthday happening to fall on Sunday the celebration must necessarily come off on Monday the 13th, but Sunday did not prove a day of rest. The new market house was only about half shingled. The ox had to be dressed and made ready for the roast, and various other little preliminaries preparatory to the occasion. The day came, and visitors from various parts began to flock in. The band from "Little York," now Toronto, was in attendance. Mr. Gurnett, of Ancaster, editor of the Gore Gazette, was present, and had quite a lengthy article in his next issue.

Waterloo, Galt, Eramosa, and Woolwich were all represented. About five hundred strangers in all were present early in the morning. The dressed ox had been placed on a windless in front of a burning log pile and turned as on a spit for about six hours. He was then cut in pieces and served up. Two pot-ash kettles of potatoes were by this time also ready for serving up, together with plenty of bread, hemlock tea, and whiskey. The entire company were supplied with a plain but sumptuous dinner; the only attempt at ornamentation being the head and horns of the bullock placed on a large side dish at the head of one of the tables. All were satisfied that the ox had been roasted whole, but very few of those who partook believed that the whole of the ox was roasted.

Next on the programme was the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the two first stone buildings in the town. One of these was intended for a bank. It was located on or about the spot where the Grand Trunk Passenger Station now stands. It was finished in the spring of 1828, and used for some months as an office by some of the Canada Company's clerks. The property was subsequently purchased from the Company by the late Dr. Alling. This building was afterwards demolished in order to make room for a large two-story brick dwelling. This was likewise demolished to make room for the station-house. The other referred to was a school-house located a few chains further to the east. Mr. David Mathews was the teacher in this house for the first ten or fifteen years. It was also used as a meeting-house or church by the various religious denominations for several years after its erection. The amusements of the day were various and diversified. The only thing that attracted much attention was

the firing of wooden cannon. These were made of beech and maple logs about two feet in length and one foot in diameter, with a two-inch bore, and bound with three strong iron bands, generally bursting after the first or second shot. A few fights brought the day's proceedings to a close, and the crowd generally dispersed. Some, however, of the more aristocratic remained for the evening. A ball and supper was to come off in the Priory. The tables were spread in the main building, as yet in an unfinished state. From sixty to eighty sat down to a sumptuous supper, Mr. Galt at the head of the table and the old Doctor acting as Vice. What followed the removing of the cloth may be easier imagined than described. Suffice it to say the night drave on wi' sangs an' clatter, and aye the grog was growin better. The ball was led off by Mr. Galt and Mrs. Leaden. Farther on in the evening, however, a row ensued, and one Thomas Brown, acting as Constable pro tem., while endeavoring to restore peace, had one of his hands badly cut by a carving knife in the hands of one of the rioters. Brown was in consequence appointed Grog Boss among the company's workmen. This Brown was father of the first child born in the town. Latilla Brown, infant, was the grantee of a house and lot as a free grant from the Canada Company promised to the first born in the town. The lot referred to is eighty-five on Quebec street.

A brisk business in building continued during the remaining part of the season. The buildings, however, were for the most part of a somewhat different class from those erected in the early part of the season. A frame store was erected and kept by the firm of Gilkison & Leaden. It stood where the produce store now stands on East Market Square, near the Grand Trunk Station.

A saw-mill was erected by the same firm on the site where the People's Mills now stands. Jenkins & Oliver built a stone store just opposite the first mentioned on the north-west side of the Square.

From some cause or other unknown to the writer the business carried on by this firm was of short duration, lasting only some four or five months. Several frame buildings were erected along the northerly side of the Square. One of these belonged to Mr. James McQuillan, now residing a short distance from town, and father of the enterprising owners of McQuillan's Block on Wyndham street. Early in the spring of 1828 two other stores were opened on the south side of Upper Market Square—one by Thomas McVane, who occupied a log house opposite the drill shed; the other was a frame building a little further eastward, with one Charles McCree as its proprietor.

The day book, now my property, was the one used in the establishment at the time. By the index it would appear that he had the names of about eighty of his customers in his books, which comprised nearly if not quite all the adult male portion of the inhabitants then in the town.

This book is at the disposal of any who might be curious enough to know what the average price of whiskey in Guelph was fifty years ago. Though the winter of 1827-8 was unusually mild, little was done in the way of building houses.

Quite a number, however, of the company's workmen were retained and employed during the winter in opening and extending the roads leading into the town.

Early in spring the work was resumed under the management of a new foreman—a young Englishman named Strickland, who had been in the country for a few years, and professing to have had some practical experience in new country life.

Mr. Galt first met with him in Toronto, and was so favourably impressed with his abilities, together with some satisfactory recommendations, that he brought him to Guelph on trial, and finally gave him the entire management of the company's works, which consisted mainly for a few months in bridge building and other general improvements.

By this time the town had assumed such proportions that it was deemed desirable to hold semi-annual fairs. So the first Mondays in May and November were the days named.

The first May Fair in Guelph was a day long to be remembered. The show of stock, however, was something very different from what was exhibited at our last Easter Fair. Three cows and two yoke of oxen comprised the entire stock on the ground.

It was a rare thing in those days for gatherings of this sort to pass off without a few fights. On this occasion it was Irishman pitted against Yankees. Two brothers named Sullivan appear to have been the principal actors on the Yankee side. A row commenced at a newly-opened tavern called the "Horn of Plenty," kept by one Charles McTague, resulting very unfavourably for the poor Yankees. As soon as that affray was over one of the bystanders hurried off up town to Jones' tavern, where a number of Irishmen were collected, and told them that the Yankees had gouged out a bushel of Irishmen's eyes. This, of course was the signal for a general

onslaught upon the perpetrators. The Yankees, only about half a dozen in number, perceiving that the odds were against them, and that they were likely to be again overpowered, fled for refuge in the direction of their boarding-house, with twice their number of Irishmen close at their heels. They succeeded, however, in reaching the house and getting the door closed before their pursuers overtook them. This was a small log house which stood on the lot where Cook's Hotel now stands on Cork street, and kept as a tavern or boarding-house by a man named Yankee Mathews, still living, I believe. The Irishmen, however, were determined not to be foiled, and began to force open the door.

My father happening to be in the house at the time, and perceiving that the Yankees were all armed with axes, and fully determined to use them should the others force an entrance, quietly got out through a small window at the rear end and went round to the crowd in front, assuring them that murder would surely be committed if they persisted in entering the house, and finally succeeded in persuading them to leave, still vowing vengeance on all the Yankees they could find in town.

Mr. Shade, from Galt, who was well known to be a Yankee, was in town, but took the precaution of keeping out of the way. He rode a very fine horse, and put up at Jones' Hotel.

Now it was verily believed that the poor animal was suspected of being Yankee, too, from the fact that in the morning when it was brought out of the stable it was minus the tail.

An action for damages was instituted against Jones, resulting in a verdict for the plaintiff for sixty dollars and costs. Jones left soon

after, and was succeeded by a man named Venhoutin.

Quite a number of emigrants came in during the early part of the summer. Among them were some eight or ten families from Paisley in Scotland.

The majority of these were temporarily quartered in a large log house newly erected for Dr. Dunlop. This house stood on the south bank of the River Speed, a little north-east of the new English Church. It was demolished only some eight or ten years ago. Doctor Dunlop took these Paisley bodies, as he was pleased to call them, under his special charge, and took an interest in selecting farms for them, etc. Some of them, I believe, were among the first settlers in that part of the township known as the Paisley Block. He also acted as their physician for a time, as it would appear from a little incident related by Mr. Strickland before referred to. This gentleman amused himself occasionally in interviewing the Doctor's eccentricities and relates the following anecdote:—I remember, he says, one time in particular. He came to my office and inquired for me. On being informed by the store porter (Mr. Fielding, father of the present landlord of the Great Western Hotel), that I had just gone out, he said to tell him when he came back to take the calomel and jalap down to my house and treat those Paisley bodies to a dose apiece. What! all of them, sir? Yes, to be sure. They are but just arrived, and have got as fat as pigs on the voyage, and some of their bacon must be taken off, or with this heat we shall have them all sick on our hands, and tell him not to spare the jalap.

The time was now nearing when the subject of holding another King's birthday celebration must be considered. And the question as to how it was to be observed was of all the most perplexing. Some were in favour of a grand ball and supper; others contended that another ox should be roasted. A few, however, of the more economical, thought there would be far more fun out of a barrel of whiskey than either of the two first mentioned. The vote being taken, it was found that whiskey had a large majority. So on the morning of the 12th a barrel of whiskey was rolled out and placed in the market-house, and notwithstanding the limited means of advertising in those days a goodly number were in attendance, and, as might be expected, things began to get tolerably lively towards evening. The proceedings were brought to a close by a grand concert, as quite a number of the more devoted lingered around the much-loved spot and were seen at a late hour sitting in ranges along the steps of the market-house singing heartily "We Won't Go Home Till Morning."

The 12th day of August, 1829, was again observed for the last time in Guelph, the only demonstration being the firing off of as many of the old muskets as could be collected in the neighbourhood.

I wish now to return briefly to the history of the Post office. On Reid's removal from the Priory, in the spring of 1828, the appointment was transferred to a Mr. Hume, who was at that time residing in the stone store referred to, built by Jenkins & Oliver, on lot No. 1, a little west of the station. Hume died in 1832, but his widow still retained the office. The duties, however, in those days were very light, as there was but one mail a week to the town for the first three years. A change

in the ownership of the property soon after necessitated another removal. It was next located in a small frame house on Macdonnell street, near or about its intersection with Sandilands street, in rear of Carter's store. Mrs. Hume was sister to Thomas S. Husband a Clerk in the Canada Company's employ for nearly two years but left here to reside in the city of Rochester in 1829. He was a gentleman of considerable ability, and has for many years, and still is, I believe, practicing law in that city. It was while Mrs. Hume was in the occupancy of the last mentioned premises that she became the wife of the late Robert Corbet, Esq., whereupon the office was again removed by Mr. Corbet to his own premises on Cork street the property at present owned and occupied by E. Newton, Esq. On the death of Mrs. Corbet, which was soon after, Mr. Corbett was formally appointed Postmaster in June, 1837, and subsequently married Miss Oliver, daughter of the late James Oliver, Esq.- who came from New York with his family to reside in Guelph in 1829. The office was next removed to Mr. Corbet's then newly-erected block, corner of Wyndham and Cork streets, in 1850. He held the appointment of Postmaster until the time of his death, which was in 1861, a period of over twenty-four years. He was a man of correct business habits and gave general satisfaction as a public officer. His widow is still living, and now resides with her family on Norfolk street.

There were four deaths during the first year, all accidental. The first of these was about the end of July. A brewer or beer pedler named Stephen Tuttle was in town with a load of beer. On his return, and when about three-fourths of a mile down the Waterloo Road, a tree was blown across the waggon, killing him instantly without injury to either

the horse or any part of the waggon, except the box. The next was a man named Chase, who was killed by a falling beam while at a house-raising in the month of November. He was a carpenter by trade, and boarded at Jones' Hotel. Though comparatively a young man, he was very wise--in his way of thinking--wise enough to be a scoffer, and was wont to parade his scepticism occasionally among his fellow-boarders. In conversation the night previous he said to his companions:--"Boys, if you have any messages to hall, I'll take them for you." A man named Turnar was killed on the 17th of March, 1828, by a falling tree while out chopping. He had just located on the lot adjoining that now occupied by John Murphy, Esq., known as Mount Tara, formerly known as the Dwyer Farm. The other was a man named Church, who was choked by a piece of beef, on the Good Friday following, while taking his breakfast in Jones' tavern. Turner was buried in South Market Square, a few feet from the west corner of the stone building recently erected for an arsenal. His remains were never exhumed that I am aware of. The other three were taken away for interment by their friends. Macdonnell street was at that time chopped and cleared to the top of Church Hill (as it was then called), and an acre or so slashed, which was intended as a burying ground when cleared. A portion of what is known as the old burying ground was cleared off early in August, and the first one buried was a man named Reid, one of the first year's settlers in the Scotch Block on Elora Road. Two others were interred the day following--one a Mr. Wallace, father of the Mr. D. Wallace, of the township of Pilkington; the other a man name Thane, from Paisley, Scotland, who died very shortly after his arrival in town.

Horace Perry, of Port Hope, millwright, who had the contract of building the Guelph Mills, arrived in Guelph with a staff of builders and millwrights on the 28th of April, 1830. The mill was up and running on the 10th of December following.

The first Sunday School was opened by Mr. Buchanan, British Consul, in August, 1828, while in Guelph on a visit for a few days from New York It was in a small log house on South Market Square, owned by the late Benjamin Harrison, who, with his wife, were among the teachers.

The first school teacher in the town was a man named Davis, who opened a private school for a few months towards the end of 1827.

An office for job printing was opened on Waterloo street early in 1828, by a man named Chatterton, existing only some six months.

The Canada Company's offer of a town lot and house for the first weaving done in the town was awarded to the late James Hodgert, Esq., who had a loom running in the winter of 1827-8. This lot is situate on the corner of Quebec street and St. George's Square, lately the property of the Messrs. Heffernan.

The first marriage solemnized was that of Christopher Keough to Miss Ann Green in September, 1827. Mrs. Keough is still living, and resides adjacent to the town.

The first practicing physician in the town was a Doctor Welsh, in 1827.

Thomas Lynch was the first born who is now living in Guelph.

LIST OF THE NAMES OF THE FIRST YEAR'S SETTLERS IN GUELPH STILL LIVING.

Jas. Lynch, Hugh Henry, Robt. Thompson, Jas. McQuillen, Mrs. Jas. McQuillen, Felix Henlon, Mrs. Michael Allen, Mrs. Ann Keough, D. Stirton, Donald Wallace, Hugh Wallace, Alex. McDonald, Walter McDonald, Alex. Kennedy (teacher), Thos. McBride, Mrs. McBride, John Gillis Mrs. Charles McTague, Mrs. John McTague, Mrs. Peter McTague, Mrs. Soden, Mrs. Bickters, Mrs. Tobin, Rory McCrae, Wm. McCrae, Henry Foster, Jas. Benham, Mrs. Macdonald (widow), mother of Alex. Macdonald; Mrs. McCrae (widow), mother of Wm. and Rory McCrae; Wm. Croft, Miss F. Harrison, Mrs. Henry, Alex. Campbell, Thomas Daily.

SECOND YEAR'S SETTLERS.

Wm. McCuen, Sami. McCuen, Mrs. Ann Mitchell, Mrs. Jane Ritchie, Martin Duley, Isaac Lenix, Mrs. Mannie, William Patterson, Robert Patterson, Mrs. Charles McWilliams, Mrs. Laird (widow), Thomas Lynch, Joseph Margin, Wm. Legan, Arch. McCorkindale, John McCorkindale, John Drew, Jas. Keough, Wm. Benham, Bernard McTague, Sarah McTague, Robert Knowles, Mrs. Fields, Janet McKerste, William McKersle, John McKerste, David McKersle, Gavin McKersle, Robert McKersle.

List of some of those known to have been residents of Guelph in the winter of 1827-8 in addition to those already given or referred to in the narrative: — Chas. Armstrong, D. D. Akins, Chas. Boyington, Thos. Baker, Chas. Burns, Jach Billard, John Clark, James Coleman, Robert Clark, Ed. Carroll, John Clark, James Cornfoot, Daniel Dougen, Wm. Dellmore, James Elliott, Robert Elder, John Foster, John Ferrell, Wm. Gregg, David

Gibbs, Edward Gilmore, Daniel Hill, Louis Howard, John Hall, John Herrald, George Henry, Thomas Johnson, Thomas Kelly, Wm. Kemly, Enoch Kenyon, Urieh Lampart, John Lennox, Thomas Lee, Malcolm Livingston, James McCartney, Michael Mullen, Wm. McCrae, John McDonald, James McGarr, John McLaod, McLaran & Miller, John McNeil, Hugh McDonald Peter Butchard, Alex. Rosa, John Gaffney, John Smith, Geo. Wallace, Alex Reid, Wm. Johnson, Richard Johnson, Alex. McTavish, J. Oliver, Henry Pennybaker, Thomas Stewart, Thomas Smith, Fenton Molloy, John Barnes, Joseph Molloy, Robert McCuen, John McNulty, James Thompson, John Thompson, John Taft, W. W. Wright, John Wilson, Matthias Wert, James Yates, John Mitchell, Andrew Ritchie.

ROBERT THOMPSON.

Ellanburn,[2]
Guelph, April 21st, 1877.

GUELPH:
Mercury Steam Printing House, Macdonnell Street.
1877.

[2]Ellanburn is still standing. It is to the west of Guelph.

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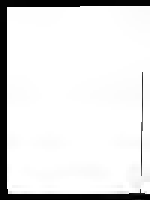
Thompson, Robert
An early view of Guelph

Inventor
Jan Hendrik Ter Horst
Ann Arbor

Assignor
to
Parker Pen Company, Janesville, Wisconsin, a corporation of Wisconsin



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